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AM-SOVWEAPONS 6-19

EVIDENCE RUSSIANS USING NERVE GAS?

BOSTON (UPI) -- POSSIBLE EVIDENCE OF THE USE OF NERVE GAS BY RUSSIAN TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN WAS TURNED OVER TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT BY AN AMERICAN JOURNALIST WHO SPENT MORE THAN A WEEK WITH REBELS IN THE WAR-TORN NATION, IT WAS REPORTED THURSDAY.

AN 80-POUND FILTER TAKEN FROM THE AIR INTAKE SYSTEM OF A SOVIET SCOUT CAR WAS TURNED OVER TO PENTAGON SPECIALISTS BY CALEN GREER, A FORMER MARINE, FREE LANCING FOR "SOLDIER OF FORTUNE," A MAGAZINE WRITTEN FOR MERCENARIES, THE BOSTON GLOBE SAID.

IF THE FILTER HAD BEEN USED IN THE FIELD, EXPERTS MAY BE ABLE ANALYZE THE TYPE OF GAS REPORTEDLY BEING USED BY SOVIET FORCES.

GREER, WHO BRIEFED HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE MEMBER WILLIAM DICKINSON, R-ALA., ABOUT HIS FINDINGS, ALSO BROUGHT BACK SAMPLES OF THE SOVIET UNION'S MOST MODERN WEAPONRY, THE GLOBE SAID.

THE ITEMS INCLUDED THE FILTER, A HAND-HELD MISSILE LAUNCHER, STICKS OF A NAPALM-LIKE INCENDIARY, AMMUNITION FROM A NEW SOVIET ASSAULT RIFLE AND HUNDREDS OF SLIDES OF RUSSIAN ARMOR.

SOME OF THE WEAPONRY WAS KEPT BY THE MAGAZINE FOR EXAMINATION BY ITS OWN EXPERTS.

"IT'S A VERY GREAT CONCERN TO ME IF, AS IT SEEMS, OUR INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY HAS BEEN UNABLE TO GATHER AS MUCH INFORMATION AS A FREE LANCE WRITER LIKE MR. GREER," SAID DICKINSON IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE PAPER.

"I CAN'T TELL WHETHER THE CIA KNOWS ANY MORE THAN THE DIA (THE PENTAGON'S DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY), BUT I'VE ASKED THEM TO COME IN & TELL ME WHAT THEY KNOW," HE SAID.

"I'D BE VERY CONCERNED IF I FOUND THEY DIDN'T KNOW AS MUCH AS THIS MAN DOES. WHAT PARTICULARLY CONCERNS ME IS THE EVIDENCE OF SOVIET USE OF GAS IN AFGHANISTAN," SAID DICKINSON.

"IF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY CAN NOW CONFIRM THAT THE RUSSIANS ARE USING GAS IT SHOULD BE MADE PUBLIC AND CONGRESS SHOULD RESPOND BY APPROPRIATING THE NECESSARY FUNDS TO ACQUIRE A DEFENSIVE CAPABILITY, AS WELL AS AN OFFENSIVE CAPABILITY FOR DETERRENT EFFECT," HE SAID.

GREER, A RESIDENT OF CANON CITY, COLO., SPENT 11 DAYS IN APRIL WITH MOSLEM REBELS SOUTH OF AFGHANISTAN'S CAPITAL, KABUL.

THE MAGAZINE RETAINED A HAND-HELD MISSILE LAUNCHER AND 5.4 MM BULLETS USED BY THE RUSSIAN AKS-74 RIFLE, THE GLOBE SAID. THE BULLETS WERE HOLLOW TIPPED -- AN APPARENT VIOLATION OF THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS.

UPI 06-19 11:35 PED